

CD 2007--30-31

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MUSIC



2006-2007 SEASON

WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET GREAT MUSIC

Friday, March 23, 2007
7:30 pm. Walter Hall

University of Toronto
Faculty Artist Series
Presents

Erika Raum, violin
Lydia Wong, piano

PROGRAM

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 94

Robert Schumann

Nicht schnell
Einfach, innig
Nicht schnell

Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano

Krzysztof Penderecki

Larghetto
Allegretto scherzando
Notturmo: Adagio
Allegro
Andante

INTERMISSION

Grand Sonata for Piano and Violin in A major

Charles Czerny

Allegro con brio
Andante grazioso
Allegro moderato

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Program Notes

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 94

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Schumann composed these three romances, originally for oboe and piano, in December 1849 as a Christmas gift for his wife Clara. Though Schumann politely declined his publisher's request to print the work for oboe or clarinet, the initial idea of ad libitum substitutions persisted, and eventually even an alternative violin part was introduced. So much the better for us listeners: the melodies take on a different character but sound equally beautiful on all three instruments.

The first and third romances are both in A minor and marked *Nicht schnell* (Not fast). The plaintive melody in the first is answered by a slightly foreboding theme in the third. The second romance (*Einfach, innig*—literally “Simple, intimate”), in A major, despite a more sombre central section, sets forth a more optimistic tone that helps balance the set.

Composed in what Schumann called his “most fruitful year” (he completed over 40 works of enormous variety, from the light to the serious, for solo piano to opera), the Romances are among a number of chamber works of 1849 for a limited number of instruments. Curiously enough, except for the *Adagio und Allegro* for Horn, Op. 70, all these works (the others being the *Phantasiestücke* for Clarinet, Op. 73, and the *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* for Cello, Op. 102) are cycles of miniatures that share the same tonic: A minor/major.

Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano

KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI (1933-)

An accomplished violinist in his youth, Penderecki composed his first violin sonata in 1953 before beginning studies at the Academy of Music in Kraków, Poland. It's an early work in which each movement lasts just a few minutes. Both time and

scale separate this modest work from its successor: written in 1999, the second violin sonata is 35 minutes long.

Dedicated to Anne-Sophie Mutter, the sonata's structure is novel not just in its five-movement plan but also in the movements' arrangement: slow-fast-slow-fast-slow. The first slow movement is a *Larghetto*. Initially unaccompanied, the violin presents a sparse and extended pizzicato passage that introduces the work's unifying motif: a dotted rhythm that descends in a chromatic chain of rising half-steps. The second movement, marked *Allegretto scherzando*, follows without break. Lively, dance-like and spiky, it builds up to a frenetic, dense and agitated climax before calming down.

The third movement is the only titled movement: a *Notturmo* (Nocturne) marked *Adagio*. The dotted-chromatic motif is ever-present, but is here embedded into an ethereal and floating texture created by the violin and piano moving in different tempos. The dreamy quality is repeatedly displaced by further internal rhythmic distortions and agitation, and by the juxtaposition of contrasting material—as if nocturnal contemplation is constantly interrupted by diurnal “noise.” At the centre of the conflict is a serene chorale-like moment that proves to be a fleeting moment of beauty.

In the penultimate movement, an *Allegro*, rhythm itself becomes the arena of struggle: a dotted rhythm mingles and battles with triplets. The climax is articulated by a massive piano cluster and by screeching arpeggiated tremolo in the violin. The finale, an *Andante*, follows without break. Under a trill in the violin, the piano recapitulates the work's principal dotted-chromatic motif. A passage from the central *Adagio* is also woven into the fabric. The work ends anti-climactically: quietly, and in the extreme registers, with an open-fifth C chord coloured by D-flat, a final reminder of the central chromatic motif—and perhaps a vague allusion to

the similar, though linear, gesture that concludes Schubert's C-major String Quintet.

Penderecki was for many years the leading figure of the Polish avant-garde. He came to prominence in 1960 with his expressionistic *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* for 52 strings. In this and other works of the 1960's, he explored graphic notation and unusual string textures, including quarter-tone clusters, group glissandos, and a wide range of vibratos, tremolos and percussive effects. After 1975, however, Penderecki softened his modernist stance by adopting a more lyrical melodic style infused with neo-romantic elements, but coupled these new influences with his austere textures of the 1960's. Penderecki's chamber music output is relatively small next to his vast catalogue of major choral compositions, oratorios, operas and symphonies.

Grand Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major

CHARLES CZERNY (1791-1857)

Czerny's fate as a forgotten composer is a reminder of the enormous talent that often toils in the shadow of the truly great. At the age of eight, he began studying the works of Beethoven, with whom he began piano lessons two years later. At 10 he could apparently play almost everything by Mozart and Clementi. Before he reached his teens, he reconstructed Beethoven's first two symphonies from the parts (the scores had not yet been published) and later, in his memoirs, remarked that, "Thus, very early on, I received a rather correct understanding of orchestration; and this work gave me such pleasure that I also made up scores for several Haydn and Mozart symphonies, which is in any case much more instructive for the student than just studying ready-made scores." At 13, he was hired by Beethoven's patron, Prince Lichnowsky, to regularly play Beethoven's compositions for the aristocrat, a task that the boy easily obliged by memorizing all of

Beethoven's piano sonatas written until that time. At 14, Beethoven entrusted him to create the piano reduction of his opera *Fidelio* and frequently asked him to proof-read newly published works. Czerny grew into a virtuoso who became famous for his interpretation of Beethoven's works.

From a young age, Czerny developed an incredible work ethic. For most of his life he taught piano all day (12 hours per day if one is to believe his memoirs)—and then would compose at night. Despite his "part-time" status as a composer, he published 861 opus numbers (and even more without opus) that include thousands of exercises and etudes for the piano, many of which remain in common use. His enormous productivity is explained by an anecdote that would have Czerny composing four works at a time: he would write one piece down to the bottom of the page and then move on to the next three in similar fashion; at that point, the ink on the first page would have dried, and he repeated the procedure.

The product of one such multi-tasking session might have been the Grand Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major. A work that remains unpublished, it was recently rescued from the archives by Czerny-champion and pianist Anton Kuerti, whose 2002 recording with violinist Erika Raum for CBC Records is the only one in existence. In his liner notes, Kuerti mentions the "Schubertian" harmonic twists that predate Schubert himself—who was only 10 years old at the time of the sonata's composition in 1807.

The first such "Schubert" moment occurs in the opening movement, an *Allegro con brio*: during the development section, there is a remarkable and breathtaking modulation from the tonic to E-flat, the most remote key. Above the rich harmonic palette are draped, as Kuerti puts it, "long, soaring melodies whose aristocratic fervour is quite overwhelming." The slow movement, an *Andante grazioso*, showcases a graceful Mozartean dialog between the instruments, inflected throughout by an elegant staccato figure in the piano, and even more delightful

when the violin takes it up. The harmonic surprise in this C-major movement is a false recapitulation in—of all keys!—D-flat major (the Neapolitan semi-tonal relationship was a favourite device of Schubert).

The finale, an *Allegro moderato*, contains some of the sonata's most dramatic music, underscored at one point by thunderous triplets in the piano's bass. In one episode, Czerny passes through E-flat (minor) reminding the listener of the same remote tritonal key relationship in the first movement. Another notable harmonic event is the return of the theme in B-flat—again that Neapolitan!—before a final modulation to the tonic A major.

Czerny was Beethoven's most important pupil and maintained a close association with him until the elder composer's

death in 1827. Credited as being an important conveyor of Beethoven's legacy, Czerny counted Liszt among his many distinguished pupils. But Kuerti wonders if Czerny, with his Third Sonata (which he calls "outstandingly original")—in the same key and with the same opus number as Beethoven's *Appassionata*—was, rather than paying homage, actually challenging his former teacher to a duel. "What a daring gambit," suggests Kuerti, "akin to writing a new Faust after Goethe. My speculation is indeed that this was his final declaration of independence from his teacher, proclaiming that 'I can do it too.'"

Notes © 2007 by Robert Rival, doctoral candidate in composition in the Faculty of Music. www.robertrival.com

Biographies

Known for her "engaging sensitivity and a gorgeously full tone," (The Strad), Canadian violinist **Erika Raum** continues developing a following here in her native country and internationally. Playing professionally since the age of twelve, Ms. Raum quickly rose through the ranks by taking first place at the 1992 Joseph Szigeti International Violin Competition in Budapest as well as the award for best interpretation of a Mozart concerto. She has returned on many occasions to perform in Hungary, Portugal, Sweden, Austria, Germany, England, Italy and France. She has appeared as guest artist with such orchestras as the Budapest Radio Orchestra, the Szombathely Symphony Orchestra, the Austro-Hungarian Orchestra, and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra.

A distinguished musician abroad, Erika also performs frequently throughout her homeland with orchestral appearances in cities such as Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Ottawa, Victoria, Halifax, and Edmonton. Both a recitalist and chamber musician, some of her recent international highlights include the Festival Pablo Casals in Prades France, Beethoven

Festival in Warsaw, the BargeMusic Festival in New York, Seattle Chamber Music Festival and past invitation include the Budapest Spring Festival, Szombathely Festival in Hungary, Carnegie Hall as well as the Caramoor and Prussia Cove festivals. Last summer saw her perform at the Festival Pablo Casals and at the Chamber Festival in Perpignan, France. Her performances are often heard on an array of radio networks like CBC across Canada and the NPR in the U.S.

As a recording artist, Erika joined internationally renowned pianist Anton Kuerti in releasing the world premiere recording of Carl Czerny's piano and violin works. Recorded on this country's most active label, Musica Viva of CBC Records, this premiere recording highlights the masterfully composed, powerfully expressive works by the precocious composer during his teen years. Her most recent release for the Arktos label consisted of the Brahms Horn Trio and another recording premiere: *Pantheon* by the esteemed composer (and mother!) Elizabeth Raum. With pianist Lydia Wong, they will soon record the complete violin and piano works of Krystof Penderecki.

In 1993, Elizabeth Raum wrote her a violin concerto entitled "Faces of Woman." The work was commissioned by the Regina Symphony Orchestra and broadcast nationally by the CBC. Erika's sister, Jessica Raum, produced and directed the award winning documentary "Like Mother, Like Daughter" which recorded the event.

Erika Raum is a graduate of the University of Toronto where she studied with the late Professor Lorand Fenyves and was awarded the prestigious Eaton Scholarship upon her graduation. She is also a recipient of The Canada Council for the Arts - Career Development Grant. Ms. Raum is currently on the faculties of the Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto. She continues her presence on the summer faculty of The Banff Centre for the Arts and has been a guest teacher at the Orford Arts Centre this summer.

One of Canada's most sought after collaborative pianists, acclaimed for her "vivacious playing" (Daily Telegraph) and "sparkling clarity" (The Strad), **Lydia Wong** appears regularly with the world's pre-eminent performers. Venues across the globe from Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City to London's Wigmore Hall have featured her expertise in partnership with such artists as Lorand Fenyves, Patrick Gallois, Nobuko Imai, Arto Noras, Erika Raum, Shauna Rolston and Scott St. John.

Following her successful Banff Centre collaboration with Krzystof Penderecki on the North American premiere of his Sextet, Ms. Wong has

enjoyed a particular association with the composer. She was invited to perform the Sextet and other works at the Festival Casals in Puerto Rico and at the "Making Music" series at Carnegie Hall. In 2003, with violinist Erika Raum, she gave the North American premiere of Penderecki's Violin Sonata No.2 in Toronto; she also performed at Maestro Penderecki's 70th birthday celebration in Warsaw, Poland and served as a member of the jury for the Seventh Annual International Contemporary Chamber Music Competition in Krakow, Poland. Ms. Wong and Erika Raum will be recording all of Maestro Penderecki's work for violin and piano with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council.

Active in new music, Ms. Wong performed as soloist with the Esprit Orchestra in *...quasi una fantasia...* by Gyorgy Kurtag. CentreDiscs has released her recording of Alexina Louie's Piano Quintet with the Accordes String Quartet and will be following this with a disc of the music of Melissa Hui. Volume one of French music for flute and piano recorded with Patrick Gallois was issued on the Naxos label this March. She can also be heard on Marquis Classics and Phoenix Records and has performed for networks in North America, Africa and Europe besides broadcasting regularly for the CBC.

A graduate of the University of Toronto and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Ms. Wong currently teaches at the University of Toronto and is a faculty member of the summer music program at the Banff Centre for the Arts.





Grazie mille!

This concert concludes the 2006-2007 Faculty Artist Series. We thank you for your support of our concerts and hope you have enjoyed our programming. We will be announcing the 2007-08 season in the summer. An electronic version of our season brochure will be available for download at www.music.utoronto.ca. If you are not on our mailing list and would like to receive a printed brochure, please fill out the form below and return it to the Box Office or mail it to NOTES Request, Faculty of Music, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park, Toronto ON M5S 2C5.

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